Speaking Up

.et's Hear It for 1982's 'Ten Uppity Women'

SUSAN G. BUTRUILLE

or the 23rd year, Mr. "he-wa-bad-taste-when-he-saa-Blackwell has announced his of women who don't measure o his concept of True Woman-1 — with apologies to Dustin man, of course.

ist year Mr. Blackwell pro-nced Dolly Parton "an atomic bean explosion," and Barbara drell "Yukon Sally playing Alamo." This year he's de-ed winner Charlene Tilton as ictorian lampshade holding eath."

ey come from a long line.

nelia Bloomer was a 19th-ry Uppity Woman who pop-ed a comfortable alternative te constricting cage-like ling imposed on the True an of the Victorian age. As r of The Lily, the first Uppi-oman newspaper, Bloomer ised the new turkish style r costume which came to be d after her.

e True Woman of the 19th ry was to be pious, pure, do- and submissive. And the Woman costume served as rfect tool to keep the True n in her place as an elegant rene creature, meant for inment and display.

True Woman's dress alone d 20 or more yards of fab-rn over voluminous petti-which were often stiffened eel hoops. The entire cos-eighed up to 20 pounds. A Woman's corset, reinforced ys of steel or bone, would hed up, Scarlett O'Hara-s shrink her waist. Some had ribs removed to make ist even smaller. Pointed-gh-heeled, laced-up shoes ted the True Woman's

e costumes have been ilded cages" — an apt de-. Imprisoned underneath ers of elegant fabric and True Woman could hard-let alone run, exercise or en forbid — engage in mall wonder, then, that Woman of the 19th cen-nently suffered fainting iscarriages, malformed rgans and chronic back roblems.

e, a woman could loosen t and shed some of her ts. But she still had to with the excess fabric, a particularly dangerous otiating a stairway with one hand and a lantern r way in the other.

the Uppity Women. loomer, suffragists Eliz-dy Stanton and Susan B. r and others began to wear the baggy "Bloomer" trousers for comfort, freedom and safety. Farm women, mill girls, homemakers and athletically-inclined women across the country soon opted for the comfort of the bloomers.

But the Uppity Women quickly learned that by seeking alternatives to the True Woman costume, they risked far more than landing on the Worst Dressed list of the Mr. Blackwells of the day.

Newspaper editors in the United States and Europe had a field day, gleefully portraying the "Bloomer Girls" as swaggering, pants-wearing, cigar-smoking, beer-swilling viragos, determined to take over business and commerce while forcing their skirted husbands to stay home and tend the house and children. It seemed that any hint for crossing the line beyond behavior appropriate to the True Woman threatened the whole relationship between the sexes.

One by one, the Uppity Women gave up and went back to the True Woman costume. The humiliation wasn't worth it. As Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote, "We put the (bloomers) on for greater freedom, but what is physical freedom compared with mental bondage?"

The bloomer fad faded and was almost forgotten until about the end of the century, when expanding options and the westward movement provided more acceptable alternatives to the True Woman costume. The introduction of the bicycle in the 1880s aided the comeback of bloomer-like costumes after women discovered they couldn't mount the new contraptions in full skirts. From then on, women's fashions gradually began to provide more freedom of choice.

The 19th century is past. But 19th century thinking is not. Mr. Blackwell and others remain as designing dinosaurs intent on keeping women in their place as lovely, harmless ornaments.

Bill Blass, Mr. Blackwell's colleague, has made his own decree on the proper role and appearance of today's True Woman:

"At last women are going to stop playing at being earth mothers or political activists or intellectuals, and return to their true and proper role in life — dressing up, looking pretty, perfect and serene. It's back to the good old days, when a woman was an esthetic pleasure, an object d'art, and not a social or political annoyance."

Here's to this year's Ten Uppity Women. For those who didn't make the list, there's always next year.

The List

Midler ys a ife'

Mr. Blackwell's cattier than usual this year, commenting on his list of the Ten Worst Dressed Women for 1982. Judge for yourself:

- Princess Diana — "She invaded Queen Victoria's attic."
- Bonnie Franklin — "Not Charlie's aunt, but Aunt Charlie."
- Victoria Principal — a "Dallas Valley girl."
- Charlene Tilton — a "Victorian lampshade holding her breath."

tte Midler — a "second-hand Rose after a hurricane."
ncess Jasmin Kahn — a "preppie gypsy."
istine Onassis — resembling "Daddy's tanker."
thy Lee Crosby — Her wardrobe "looks as if she bought damage sale, wore it all and . . . that's incredible."
r Stephenson — "Mrs. Miniver in a tutu."
stin Hoffman and Houston Mayor Kathy Whitmore — likes wearing Betsy Bloomingdale discards." (They tied place.)

e Belts Will Make the ion News for Spring

Sew Simple

Eunice Farmer

ce Farmer: I've been ide belts are really in ing and summer. For kept my waistline and ric information about of various types. —

There are commer-make, as well as sash-s and strips of Ultra-around the waist. The limit, so use your

ttern in the books for of the wide belt — ern No. 4680. These ade of fabric or syn-d leathers.

a small waistline, ant to have fun with if your waistline can't asis, select a match-d of a contrast and a width with one of the tive buckles that can belt to belt.

of my own belts by rn belting in Ultra-eather or whatever at-looking belt for y. I love the buckles . Purchase one and of belts. They can be tly. Large buckles te fashion accent for

book, "It's Sew Simple," for the sewing tip of the week is Mrs. James Albright, 206 Richwood Drive, Mountain Home, Ark. 72653. Her tip:

"When needing a third hand when trimming or ripping a seam, put the garment under your sewing machine presser foot, lower the foot and your fabric will hold firm. It's easy to keep moving it as you work!" (My thanks to several other readers who also sent in this tip.)

(You, too, could win a copy of the book "It's Sew Simple." Send your sewing tips to Eunice Farmer, in care of this newspaper. If she selects your tidbit for publication, Mrs. Farmer will send you the book.)

For your copy of the Sew Simple booklet, "Flip Cape," send 50 cents and a long, stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request to Eunice Farmer, in care of this newspaper.

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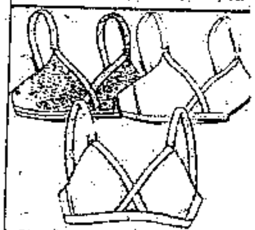

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